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STUDY OF YOKOYAMA BIZEN-TO

Transactions of the Philadelphia Area Token Kai
(Nihon Token Hozon Kai)

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August, 1984

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend grateful appreciation to my fellow members of the Philadelphia Area Token Kai for their interest in and support of this research. Special thanks are offered to James McElhinney for his assistance with oshigata and to Charles Lee for the kanji used within the text; and to both of these for their critical review of the original draft. William Smith deserves special thanks for the typing, layout and production of the paper, for his patience, ideas and skills. I would also like to thank Lewis C. Smith for providing additional material for inclusion in the paper.

BIZEN YOKOYAMA SCHOOL

Historical Background

Bizen Province¹ holds a pre-eminent place in the history and traditions of Nippon-To. Historically, there is no evidence to establish precisely where sword-making was first introduced to Japan from China, but a strong case can be made for Bizen. The earliest records indicate that swordmaking was practiced there as early as can be determined anywhere in Japan. Sanemori is said to be the founder of the Ko-Bizen school and to have been most active during the Tenryaku period (947-957 A.D.). None of Sanemori's works are known to have survived to the present, but his son, Tomonari, and grandson, Sukenari produced works during Eien (987) that have been preserved and authenticated. Since Tomonari is the earliest Bizen smith whose works survived, even to the sword appraisers of the Koto period, he is considered the real founder of the Bizen tradition. Many of the Bizen smiths making swords in the Shinto and Shinshinto periods traced their lineage to Tomonari and signed as the 56th, 57th, 58th, etc. generations (Tomonari go ju roku dai, Tomonari go ju shichi dai, Tomonari go ju hachi dai, etc.).

Bizen was a natural setting for the establishment of a center for the smithing of swords. Some of the best natural iron sands in Japan are found in Bizen. The best charcoal was made in the hills and mountains of the province. Bizen is still known today for quality charcoal production. The two rivers, Asahi-gawa and Yoshii-gawa, provided the necessary supplies of water. The Sanyodo² highway and Inland Sea provide natural links for trade with other markets, including military capitals in other provinces.

¹Bizen province was ruled by the Ikeda clan. The Ikeda were "tozama" or outer daimyo, not having recognized the Tokugawa as overlords before Sekigahara. The Ikeda also ruled other provinces, attesting to their power despite "tozama" status, and long history as an enemy of the Tokugawa. Their Bizen holdings ranked fifteenth below the shogun's own, totaling 315,000 koku of rice yield (enough to support 63,000 people). Holdings in Echizen totaled yet another 325,000 koku (supporting 65,000 people) giving the Ikeda property status greater than some of the shogun's immediate family members. The Ikeda were known as great generals and warriors. They were great patrons of the Bizen smiths.

Further, as a testament to the high art of sword manufacture in Bizen, Akamatsu Masanori, Daimyo of Bizen in the last half of the 15th century, is known to have been a well-regarded craftsman who presented his swords as gifts to other daimyo. He studied in the Osafune school, a precursor of the Yokoyama school, and many of his blades are preserved today and are highly valued.

²The Sanyodo highway is one of the circuits ("do;" "tao" in Chinese) which connected all provinces with the capital. The traditional study of Nippon-to teaches that provinces on the same "do" have similar characteristics and, as such, are studied together. In Kantei, a partially correct score is given if a student names a smith on the same "do" as the correct smith.

The traditions of the Bizen den were greatly enhanced by the tastes of the cloistered emperor Go-toba.³ Go-toba succeeded his brother Antoku who drowned at the battle of Dan-no-ura.⁴ Though he was favored by the new Minamoto shoungate, he was stripped of all real power. The final insult to Go-toba was his forced retirement by the Hojo regent Yoshitoki,⁵ who controlled the Minamoto heir. In exile, Go-toba took up sword smithing, ostensibly to reach inner perfection. More practically, he is said to have been designing the perfect blade to kill Yoshitoki. During the period of his study, Go-toba called upon 39 "instructors," the greatest smiths of his day. This period was replete with artists; some of the greatest Koto schools were in full bloom and Go-toba was tutored by some of the greatest artists of all time.⁶ Bizen's relative importance as a sword producing province is well established by the fact that 25 of the 39 artists invited to instruct Go-toba were from Bizen.

As one of the five great traditions (Go ka den⁷) of Nippon-to, Bizen enjoyed the peaks and valleys of the evolution of the art. The low point probably occurred during the Sengoku-jidai (the period of the nation at war) in the last half of the Sixteenth century.⁸ The Nippon-to in general declined in quality. The tremendous political unrest disrupted the economic and social framework of the country. The demand for swords due to the civil war was high; production was drastically increased and quality standards were lowered. Some schools of Nippon-to experimented with new technologies including the so-called factory shops that used assembly line techniques with different apprentices and smiths working on the same blade at different steps of development. In short, a great deal of art was sacrificed during the Sengoku-jidai.

³Go-toba was placed on the imperial throne in 1183 and retired in 1198. He proved to be stronger in retirement than on the throne. He built a private army of men from imperial estates to challenge the Hojo regents and the new class of landed samurai. The "Shokyu War" of 1221 was precipitated by Go-toba's declaration that Hojo Yoshitoki was a rebel. The Hojo quickly quelled what they termed the emperor's "rebellion" and established once and for all the shogunal government in Kamakura. Go-toba was forced into exile, and stripped of all support, his generals were executed, and he took up sword smithing to seek his revenge.

⁴Dan-no-ura was the decisive battle in the Spring of 1185 in which the Minamoto (Genji) totally defeated the Taira (Heike) for military supremacy of Japan. At the end of the battle, fought by armored samurai in boats on the Inland Sea, the former emperess jumped overboard clutching the infant emperor Antoku in an early act of ceremonial suicide. Many Taira samurai followed, thus destroying the Taira clan absolutely. The emperor Go-toba, supported by the Minamoto, ascended to the throne to replace his brother.

⁵Hojo Tokimasa was the father-in-law of the first shogun, Minamoto Yoritomo. Upon Yoritomo's death in 1203, his widow, Masako, and Tokimasa forced the heir, Yoriie, to abdicate. Hojo Tokimasa was himself forced from power by his son Yoshitoki in 1205. Through a series of assassinations and clever alliances, Yoshitoki succeeded in eliminating Yoritomo's descendants and established a strong Hojo regency that ruled Japan for more than a century. It was Yoshitoki who defeated and exiled the strong bid for Imperial control exercised by Go-toba.

Some schools attempted to maintain quality standards even during this period. The Sukesada smiths of Osafune, in Bizen, were highly reputed during the late Koto period, having descended from the Osafune Sukesada's of the Fourteenth century. The high reputation of the family and the large numbers of Bizen smiths with the name invited many forgeries during this time of great demand. It is said that there were many workshops in Bizen and other provinces turning out counterfeit blades for Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea⁹ that were all signed simply "Sukesada saku."

no
koto 14th
before
15th cent.

Yokoyama School¹⁰

The Yokoyama school emerged from this troubled period as the direct continuation of the Ko-Bizen. Consequently, Bizen is the only province to have had sword making as an activity from the Heian period through the Meiji restoration. The Yokoyama school emerged, not unlike the phoenix from its ashes, and combined the traditions of its past with the technologies of the Shinto period to play a significant role in raising sword making to an artistic level worthy of study once more.

The numerous Sukesada smiths, spanning over five centuries, the many forgeries made during Sengoku-jidai and the generally lesser interest in Shinto works combine to make study of this school difficult for even Japanese students. The problem is infinitely compounded by the fact that nearly all smiths are known to have signed at least some works *niji mei* (two characters: i.e. Sukesada), even though they signed some or many with more clearly traceable personal names or honorific titles. Consequently, many students see a Sukesada signature and give up before they begin.

⁶The following smiths were called upon by Go-toba to provide him with instruction during his exile, as taken from The Arts of the Japanese Sword, B. W. Robinson, second edition, 1970, Faber and Faber, London, pp. 19-20.

In the first year, there was one instructor per month:

- 1st month, Norimune of Bizen
- 2nd month, Sadatsugu of Bitchu
- 3rd month, Nobufusa of Bizen
- 4th month, Kuniyasu of Awataguchi
- 5th month, Tsunetsugu of Bitchu
- 6th month, Kunitomo of Awataguchi
- 7th month, Muneyoshi of Bizen
- 8th month, Tsugiiye of Bitchu
- 9th month, Sukemune of Bizen
- 10th month, Yukikuni of Bizen
- 11th month, Sukenari of Bizen
- 12th month, Sukenobu of Bizen

1. 14th cent. 勘定
1. ko Bizen 勘定

continued over

* What time sequence are we discussing - muromachi? kamakura?

The Yokoyama Sukesada are in direct decent from Yozozzaemon no Jo Sukesada of the late Fifteenth and early Sixteenth Centuries. Yozozzaemon no Jo produced many fine Juyo blades. His son, Sanzaemon no Jo Sukesada is considered the founder of the Yokoyama branch of the Bizen tradition. The great-grandson of Sanzaemon no Jo, or the fourth generation of the Yokoyama branch, was named Toshiro and he was the first to work in the Shinto period. The Yokoyama School has continued through the modern era; the last Sukekane was making swords in the Showa era.

There are two smiths that are generally recognized as the best of the Yokoyama School. The first, and single best, was the sixth generation¹¹ descended from Yozozzaemon no Jo. His personal name was Hanbei, but he is known by his title Kozuke Daijo Sukesada. When "Yokoyama Sukesada" is discussed, it is in reference to his personal work. He lived from 1577 to 1674.

The second greatest smith of the Yokoyama School is Sukenaga, who worked in the Shinshinto period. He lived from 1795-1851. He was not a "mainline" smith, but a member of a corollary branch. His brother, Sukemori, was adopted into the mainline as the twelfth generation.

There is some feeling that he became disenchanted at having been "passed over" for the mainline appointment,¹² but his work is conspicuous in quality. He continued to serve the family as a corollary master and trained his nephew Sukekane before Sukekane succeeded his father, Sukemori, and became the thirteenth generation mainline master.

During the second year, there were two instructors per month:

1st month,	Kanemichi of Bizen
	Kunitomo of Awataguchi
2nd month,	Morozane of Bizen
	Nagasuke of Bizen
3rd month,	Shigehiro of Yamato
	Yukikuni of Bizen
4th month,	Chikafusa of Bizen
	Yukihira of Bungo
5th month,	Kanechika of Bizen
	Sanefusa of Bizen
6th month,	Noritsugu of Bizen
	Yoshifusa of Bizen
7th month,	Tomosuke of Bizen
	Munetaka of Hoki
8th month,	Akizane of Bizen
	Sanetsune of Bizen
9th month,	Kanesuye of Bizen
	Nobufusa of Bizen
10th month,	Tomotada of Mimasaka
	Sanetsune of Mimasaka
11th month,	Kanesuke of Bizen
	Norimune of Bizen
12th month,	Norizane of Bitchu
	Koresuke of Bizen

continued over

In the third year, Go-toba had one instructor every two months:

1st and 2nd months, Norikuni of Awataguchi
3rd and 4th months, Kagekuni of Awataguchi
5th and 6th months, Kunitsuna of Awataguchi
7th and 8th months, Muneyoshi of Bizen
9th and 10th months, Nobumasa of Bizen
11th and 12th months, Sukenori of Bizen

⁷The "Go ka den," or Five Great Schools of Nippon-to, were Bizen-den, Yamato-den, Yamashiro-den, Soshu-den, and Seki-den.

⁸The Sengoku-jidai resulted from the deterioration of the Ashikaga Shogunate. The period of war began with the Onin War in 1467; a dispute regarding shogunal succession that spread from local conflict to general melee with all daimyo fighting for defense and gain of territory and power. The last Ashikaga shogun was deposed in 1573, resulting in the total absence of any recognized military authority and was the period known as the Sengoku-jidai. Three great generals emerged between 1573 and 1600 to unify Japan; Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Tokugawa Shogun.

⁹Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea in 1592 was a simple attempt to put armies, hardened by more than a century of war, to useful purpose while keeping the peace so recently obtained at home. Hideyoshi is known to have had visions of a Japanese-dominated China, as well, believing the younger brother (Japan, in the Confucian context) was prepared to teach the older brother (China) some things of value. Despite some of his successes, he seems to have badly underestimated the weight of his undertaking. A second invasion in 1597 was ended by Hideyoshi's death in 1598.

¹⁰Yokoyama is a neighborhood in the village of Osafune. Osafune is considered the center of sword making in Bizen and had active workshops from Heian through modern times. This school of smiths adopted Yokoyama as their designation and indicated Osafune as their place of residence, as seen in their mei.

¹¹Kozuke Daijo Sukesada appears as the 6th mainline generation while his youngest brother (5th son) was considered the 7th mainline generation. Mainline families were eager to see the best smith succeed in each generation and it is not totally unusual to see brothers succeed each other. Hichibei no Jo (5th generation mainline) lived to the venerable age of 98 and Kozuke Daijo to the nearly equal age of 97. Thus, it is also known that many generations could be practicing simultaneously or even together, further confusing the issues of mei, master- pupil relations and geneology.

¹²Sukenaga, by virtue of his workmanship, certainly was deserving of appointment to the mainline family. The Japanese tradition of adopting "sons" to continue a family, lineage or trade is well known. When adoptions could be secured within lateral or corollary branches of the same family it was, of course, preferred. One can only speculate the family politics involved in securing the appointment of Sukemori rather than Sukenaga to the mainline.

JUDGING YOKOYAMA BIZEN-TO

It is difficult to present specific information related to the identification and study of any school's blades that can be generalized to more than one smith or generation. It is essential, however, in distilling each school's characteristics. The size and longevity of the Yokoyama school makes such a task more difficult and more essential.

In order to be as specific as possible, the characteristics of this school shall be discussed as they relate to the Shinto and Shinshinto periods separately.

Shinto Yokoyama Bizen-to

As stated above, Kozuke Daijo Sukesada (6th mainline generation) is considered the greatest Shinto Bizen smith. His works are, therefore, the basis of study for Bizen Yokoyama. Next to Kozuke Daijo, the works of Kawachi no Kami Sukesada (contemporary and cousin of Kozuke Daijo, son of Sozoemon no Jo, and grandson of 4th generation mainline Toshiro), are considered best. Of nearly equal merit are the works of Toshiro (4th generation mainline) and Hichibei no Jo (5th generation mainline). The following discussion will focus on works of these smiths.

Sugata (Shape)

The overall shape of the blade will have shinto characteristics combined with traditional Bizen form. Most blades are of an average length with modest Koshi-zori. The blade will taper somewhat toward the tip, though not as noticeably as in some Shinto schools. There will not be a great deal of hiraniku (convexity of cross-section). Kissaki is usually medium size.

The Yokoyama Bizen-to imparts a strong and robust impression, attributable to a rather thick kasane and a sugata best described as strong. There is a definite sense of balance to Yokoyama Bizen-to, unlike some other Shinto schools who, in attempts to recreate Koto styles, sacrificed both balance and grace.

If hi are found on these blades at all, they are simple and understated, being bo hi or bo hi with tsure hi. In general, carvings are rarely found.

The school is known to have produced daito, wakizashi and tanto. As the Edo period progressed, and the merchant class gained greater power and prestige, most Shinto schools

found their best markets were for wakizashi and tanto for commoners with the permission and funds to order blades. The Yokoyama school produced many wakizashi for this new market, but many katana were also produced. Both katana and wakizashi were produced in shinogi-zukuri form. Tanto were most often hira-zukuri, but more unusual sugata, such as unokubi-zukuri (cormorant's head shape) and moro-ha-zukuri (curved, double edged) are seen, especially for yoroi-doshi (armor piercing tanto).

Jitetsu (Grain)

The jitetsu of the Yokoyama school deserves careful study. Too casual a reading of the different sources could lead a student to the conclusion that the smiths of the school produced different grains at different times or even that the same smith produced some blades with itame kitae and some blades with mokume kitae. In fact, the grain produced by the smiths of the school is quite consistent, especially when the number of smiths and the longevity of the school is considered.

The jitetsu of the Shinto Yokoyama school has been described by Yamanaka and Robinson as ko mokume. Yoshikawa, Homma and Hawley, on the other hand, describe the kitae as itame or ko itame. The jitetsu, in fact, provides a good basis for discussion of the similarities and differences between the two "wood" grains.

The jitetsu is best described as ko itame. (See Figures 1, 2 and 3.) When compared with the kitae of the Hizen school it is clearly not the same as Tadayoshi's mokume. The Yokoyama blade is well forged and the very compact ko-itame, when compared with the loose and running itame of other schools, appears to have more of the burl usually associated with mokume. The ko-itame, however, does not possess the isolated, concentric graining found in pure mokume.

The Yokoyama ko-itame is very compact, shows clearly and is highlighted by strong ji-nie.

Hamon (Edge Pattern)

The hamon will be worked in nioi, much as that found in the Koto Bizen tradition.

Patterns of hamon are usually midare, based on choji (clover blossom) (Figure 4) or togari (pointed or saw tooth) (Figure 5) variations. Koshi-hiraki (open loop or open-spaced) (Figure 6) midare is seen as well. The Ha-buchi (distinction between the tempered edge and the rest of the ji)

Nishi Ji

PERFECT summation



Fig. 1
Mokume Kitae



Fig. 2
Ko-Itame Kitae
(Yokoyama Kitae)



Fig. 3
Itame Kitae

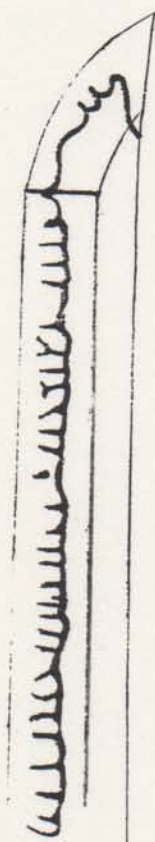


Fig. 4
Choji Hamon



Fig. 5
Togari Hamon

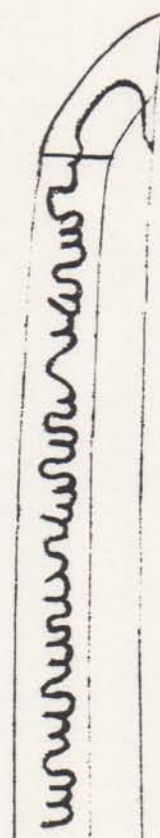


Fig. 6
Koshi-Hiraki Choji Hamon

is very distinct and beautiful as the result of very compact nioiguchi. Sunagashi and kinsuji are often found and are very well done. Chu suguha is also found on blades by the Yokoyama smiths, though not often. Yakidashi (narrowing and straightening of the hamon immediately above the hamachi) is found, but not always.

Why?
Study of the hamon provides insight into the underlying motives of this school. The exuberance of the Shinto revival can be felt in the choji midare, choji gonome and togari, all in bright nioi, and in the vigor of the sunagashi and kinsuji. At the same time, the choji and togari bases are a continuation of the Bizen Koto traditions at a time other schools were developing toran-ba¹ (Sukehiro), sudareba² (Yoshimichi), imozuru³ (Masakiyo and Yasuyo), and other totally new hamon.

feature 1, 2 ≠ 3
Following are two examples of work by Kozuke Daijo Sukesada. (Figures 7 and 8) The first was made earlier in his career than the second. Note the tight control and intensity of the first hamon and the exuberance of the second. Yet, in the second there is no sense of a loss of control, but rather an even more powerful understanding of the medium.

Boshi (Tempered Pattern at the Tip)

reaching for this!
The boshi is done in komaru (small rounded) (Figure 9) or is midare komi (uneven) (Figure 10) in small pattern. There is kaeri, sometimes extending into purposeful muneyaki. (See Figure 8.) The boshi will exhibit the same quality of nioi found in the hamon.

Nakago (Tang)

The Yokoyama nakago has the same basic characteristics as the Koto Bizen and is immediately identifiable as Bizen. The nakago is made rather short (sunsumari) with the tip made in broad Ha agari kurijiri (uneven or slanting chestnut) (Figures 11 and 12). The yasurime (file marks) are usually in Kiri (horizontal), sometimes kattesagari (slightly slanting).

Mei (Signature)

The Bizen Yokoyama school is known for its proliferation of smiths named Sukesada. As was mentioned, nearly all were known to have signed niiji mei (two character signature) at times, further confusing the issue. Most often, however, smiths of the Yokoyama school identified themselves more specifically. The signature is presented between the shinogi and the mune on the omote (Katana-mei) of the nakago, sometimes continuing to left of the shinogi or on the ura.



Fig. 7
←---



Fig. 8
←---



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Fig. 7: Hamon on sword by
Kozuke Daijo Sukesada.

Fig. 8: Hamon on sword by
Kozuke Daijo Sukesada.
Fig. 8 made later in
his career.

Fig. 9: Ko maru boshi (small circle).

Fig. 10: Midare komi boshi (uneven)..

Fig. 11: Nakago with kiri yasurime
(found on sword in Fig. 7).

Fig. 12: Nakago with kattesagari
yasurime and greater taper
(found on sword in Fig. 8).



Fig. 11
←---



Fig. 12
←---

The most common signature for all smiths would be:

Bizen no Kuni Ju Osafune Yokoyama (_ _) Sukesada.

祐定

The specific name of the smith would appear in the blanks above, making specific identification quite simple.

In the case of those smiths who were awarded specific titles, the title was often inserted as well, in addition to the school and residence designation:¹³

Bizen no Kuni Ju Osafune Yokoyama Kozuke Daijo Fujiwara Sukesada

備前國住長船横山上野大掾藤原祐定

or

Bizen no Kuni Ju Osafune Kawachi no Kami Minamoto Sukesada

備前國住長船河内守源祐定

or

Bizen no Kuni Ju Osafune Yamato no Daijo Fujiwara Sukesada

備前國住長船大和大掾藤原祐定

It is also common for signatures, including titles, to be given on the omote (Katana-omote) and the residence and other pertinent information to be given on the ura (Katana-ura or tachi-omote): (Figure 13)

Omote: Yokoyama Kozuke Daijo Fujiwara Sukesada

Ura: Bishu Osafune Ju nin

Other information found in the mei of the Yokoyama school include:

- most common*
- the name of the owner
 - the name of the person who ordered the blade
 - the date
- order*

Shin-Shinto Yokoyama Bizen-to

Overall, the differences between the Shinto and Shinshinto traditions of the Yokoyama school are reflective of the changes manifest in the entire Shinshinto effort.

¹³For oshigata of mei, see Fujishiro, Nihon Toko Jiten, "Shinto hen" as follows: Kozuke Daijo, pp. 487-488; Kawachi no Kami, p. 489; Hichibei no Jo, pp. 485-487.

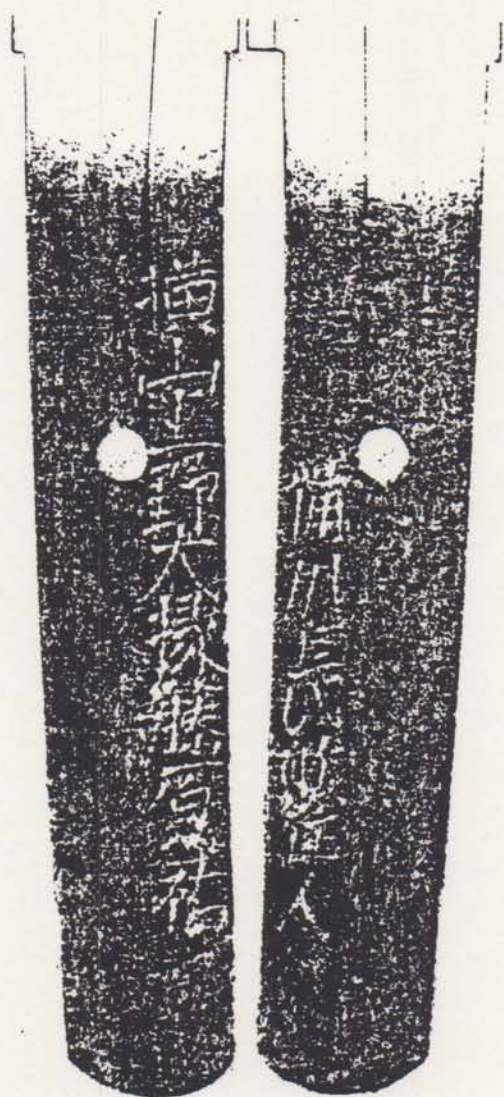


Figure 13-a

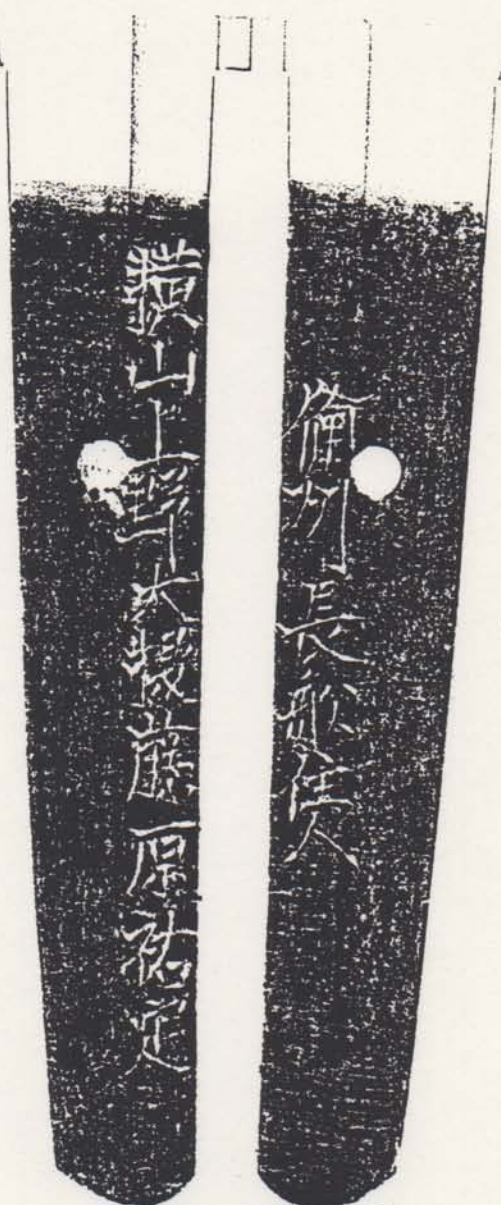


Figure 13-b

Figure 13-a: Early wakizashi by Kozuke Daijo Sukesada (as in Figure 7)
 Omote: Yokoyama Kozuke Daijo Fujiwara Sukesada
 Ura: Bishu Osafune Ju nin

Figure 13-b: Later wakizashi by Kozuke Daijo Sukesada (as in Figure 8)
 Omote: Yokoyama Kozuke Daijo Fujiwara Sukesada
 Ura: Bishu Osafune Ju nin



Figure 13-c

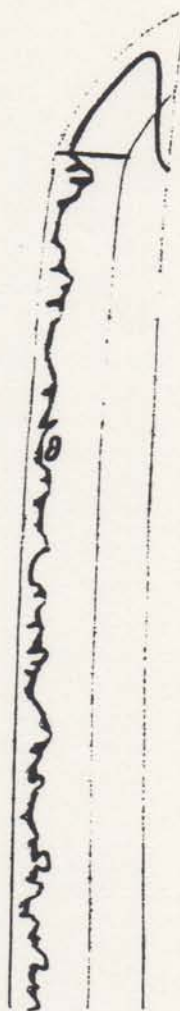


Figure 13-d

Figure 13-c: Wakizashi by another Shinto Yokoyama Sukesada bearing simple
mei without specific title
Omote: Bishu Osafune Ju Sukesada

Figure 13-d: Hamon found on sword in 13-c.

Sugata (Shape)

The shape of the blade will be made reminiscent of the blades of the Muro machi period (1336-1573). The width of the blade will be slightly narrow and will project an overall feeling of gentleness. Koshi zori will be very evident. The blade will taper to be narrow towards the kissaki which will be a short chugissaki (medium point). The kasane is much the same as before, made thick without much hiraniku. Bo hi and tsure hi are found, but rarely.

Jitetsu (Grain)

*not description of murosachi
Bizen*

The grain of the Shinshinto Yokoyama smiths raises some of the same questions as the Shinto regarding classification as ko-itame or mokume. It is even tighter and more compact than the ko-itame of the Shinto period, and, therefore, is more often designated mokume, though it is most properly labeled ko-itame.

Like many Shinshinto schools, the kitae becomes so compact at times that it appears to be muji (to have no grain structure at all). There will often be a mixture of ko-itame and muji in the ji with ohada appearing at times. The overall appearance has been described as "flat" in spite of the delicacy of the forging.

Hamon (Edge Pattern)

The hamon continues to be comprised of compact nioi forming a distinct separation of ji and ha. The width of the yakiba is considered koroai (neither too wide nor too narrow).

There are significant changes in the hamon patterns from Shinto to Shinshinto Yokoyama. The Shinshinto smiths are known for choji midare which are much more precise. (Figures 14 and 15) There are similarities with the choji of Naka Kawachi Kunisuke (nidai Kunisuke) of Osaka, sometimes called kengyo (like pointed nakago) or kobushigata (clenched fist), but much smaller than Kunisuke's. The yakidashi is also like that of the Shinto Osaka school, beginning narrow at the ha machi and widening as it moves up the ha to the beginning of the irregular pattern on the hamon.

Boshi (Tempered Pattern at the Tip)

The boshi of the Shinshinto is very similar to that of the Shinto school. Ko maru and midare komi, which will display the more precise choji representative of the Shinshinto period.

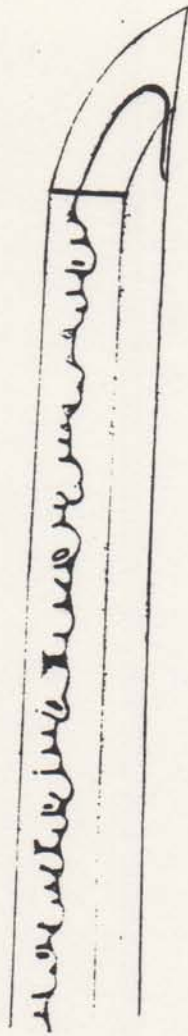


Fig. 14

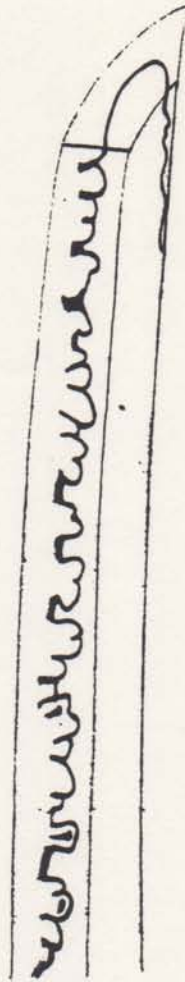


Fig. 15

Fig. 14: Typical hamon on sword by Sukenaga, best of the Shinshinto Yokoyama smiths (corollary master, teacher of Sukekane, thirteenth mainline master).

Fig. 15: Typical hamon on sword by Sukekane (thirteenth mainline master). Note similarity with choji by Naka Kawachi Kunisuke.

Nakago (Tang)

The shape of the nakago remains distinct in the Bizen den. The shape is relatively short, broad and ending in kuri jiri. The kuri jiri, however, changes from smith to smith more dramatically than in the Shinto period. The angle of the ha agari kuri jiri is more acute at times. (Figure 16)

The yasurime are kiri or slightly katte sagari (slanting left to right). The yasurime are often made very distinctly, sometimes deeply, in the nakago.

Mei (Signature)

There is a much greater diversity of names among Yokoyama smiths during the Shinshinto period than during the Shinto period. Whereas all smiths of note during the Shinto period were named Sukesada, the greatest smiths of the Shinshinto period used "Suke" as the first character of their name, but had different second characters.

The greatest Bizen smith of the Shinshinto period was Sukenaga (brother of the adopted twelfth generation mainline master, Sukemori). Next in renown are Sukekane (thirteenth mainline master, son of Sukemori and student of Sukenaga) and Sukehira (corollary master and father of Sukemori and Sukenaga).

The mei of the Shinshinto period still appears between the shinogi and mune on the katana-omote, and if necessary, is continued to the left of the shinogi or on the katana-ura. The style of signature varies more and gyosho (semi-cursive) characters are more common in Shinshinto mei. Nearly all works are dated.

Sukenaga (1794-1851) most commonly signed his works in one of the following ways:¹⁴

Bizen no Kuni Osafune ju Yokoyama Sukenaga

備前國長船住横山祐永

Yokoyama Kaga no suke Fujiwara Sukenaga

横山加賀介藤原祐永

Bizen Osafune ju Yokoyama Kaga no suke Fujiwara Sukenaga

備前長船住横山加賀介藤原祐永

¹⁴Fujishiro, pp. 483-485.



Fig. 16

Shinshintō Yokoyama nakago showing more acute
ha agari kuri juri (slanting at tip) than found
in Shinto Yokoyama nakago (see Figs. 11 and 12).

Further, as discussed earlier, he considered himself the fifty-sixth generation descended directly from Tomonari, founder of the Ko-Bizen school. He is known to have included such a designation on his blades:

Ichi Tomonari Go ju roku Dai Mago.

一友成五十六代孫

works:¹⁵ Sukekane (Figure 17) (?-1872) most often signed his

Bizen Osafune ju Yokoyama Sukekane

備前長船住横山祐包

and sometimes ended with the character "saku." 作

He also indicated that he was the fifty-eighth generation descended from Tomonari:

Tomonari Go ju hachi Dai Mago

友成五十八代孫

Sukehira (Figure 18) (1754-1829) is known to have used three mei regularly.¹⁶

Bizen no Kuni Osafune ju Fujiwara Sukehira

備前國長船住藤原祐平

Yokoyama Ise no Kami Sukehira

横山伊勢守祐平

Bizen Osafune ju Sukehira

備前長船住祐平

sometimes concluding with "saku." 作

¹⁵Fujishiro, pp. 481-482.

¹⁶Fujishiro, p. 492.



Figure 17

Figure 17: Tanto by Sukekane
Mei: Bizen Osafune Yokoyama Sukekane



Figure 18

Figure 18: Katana by Sukenaga
Omote: Yokoyama Kaga no Suke Fujiwara Choshin Sukenaga Kun Banzai
(Long live the family)
Ura: (Kikumon) Ichi Tomonari Go ju roku Dai mago Bijo Osafune Ko

Mainline Yokoyama

(Yozozaemon no Jo Sukesada)

- I Sukesada
Sanzaemon no Jo
- II Sukesada
Gembei no Jo
- III Sukesada
Hichiroemon
- IV Sukesada (first Yokoyama smith to practice in Shinto
Toshiro period)
- V Sukesada
Hichibei no Jo
- VI Sukesada
Kozuke no Daijo (Hanbei)
- VII Sukesada (youngest of four brothers of Kozuke
Hichi no shin Yamato Daijo no Daijo, but recognized as next
generation) (later signed Sukenobu)
- VIII Sukesada (second son of Kawachi no Kami Sukesada,
Tada no shin adopted into mainline family)
- IX Sukesada
Hichi bei, Toshimitsu
- X Toshimori (second son of 8th generation)
Hichi bei
- XI Sukesada
Hichi bei
- XII Sukemori (adopted into mainline from Corollary family)
Hichi bei
- XIII Sukekane (trained by Sukenaga in Corollary family before
assuming position in mainline family)
- XIV Sukekane (employed at Army Arsenal, Tokyo)
- XV Sukekane
Kakutaro

I	Sukesada Sanzaemon no Jo								
II	Sukesada Gembei no Jo	—	Sukesada Jubei no Jo						
III	Sukesada Hichiroemon	—	Sukesada Gonzaemon, Haikuo, Jiro	—	Sukesada Hikobei no Jo (moved to Awa Province)				
IV	Sukesada Toshiro	—	Sukesada Yozobei no Jo (moved to Osaka actually 4th son of 2nd generation)						
V	Sukesada Hichikei no Jo	—	Sukesada Goro	—	Sukesada ① Genzaemon no Jo	—	Sukesada ② Sozoemon no Jo	—	Sukesada Hichirozaemon no Jo — Sukesada Goro
VI	Sukesada Kozuke no Daijo	—	Sukesada Magodaiu	—	Sukesada Hichidaiu	—	Yokoyama Takei		
VII	Sukesada Hichi no Shin Yamato no Daijo								
VIII	Sukesada Tada no Shin								
IX	Sukesada Hichibei	—	Toshiyoshi Takunishin						

① See Corollary Generations for descendent branch

② See Corollary Generations for descendent branch

Corollary Generations

- ① Sukesada (3rd son of 4th generation mainline Sukesada)
Genzaemon no Jo

Sukesada
Gennoshin

Sukesada
Genhachiro

Sukesada
Yasujiro, Genhachiro, Toshitsuhu

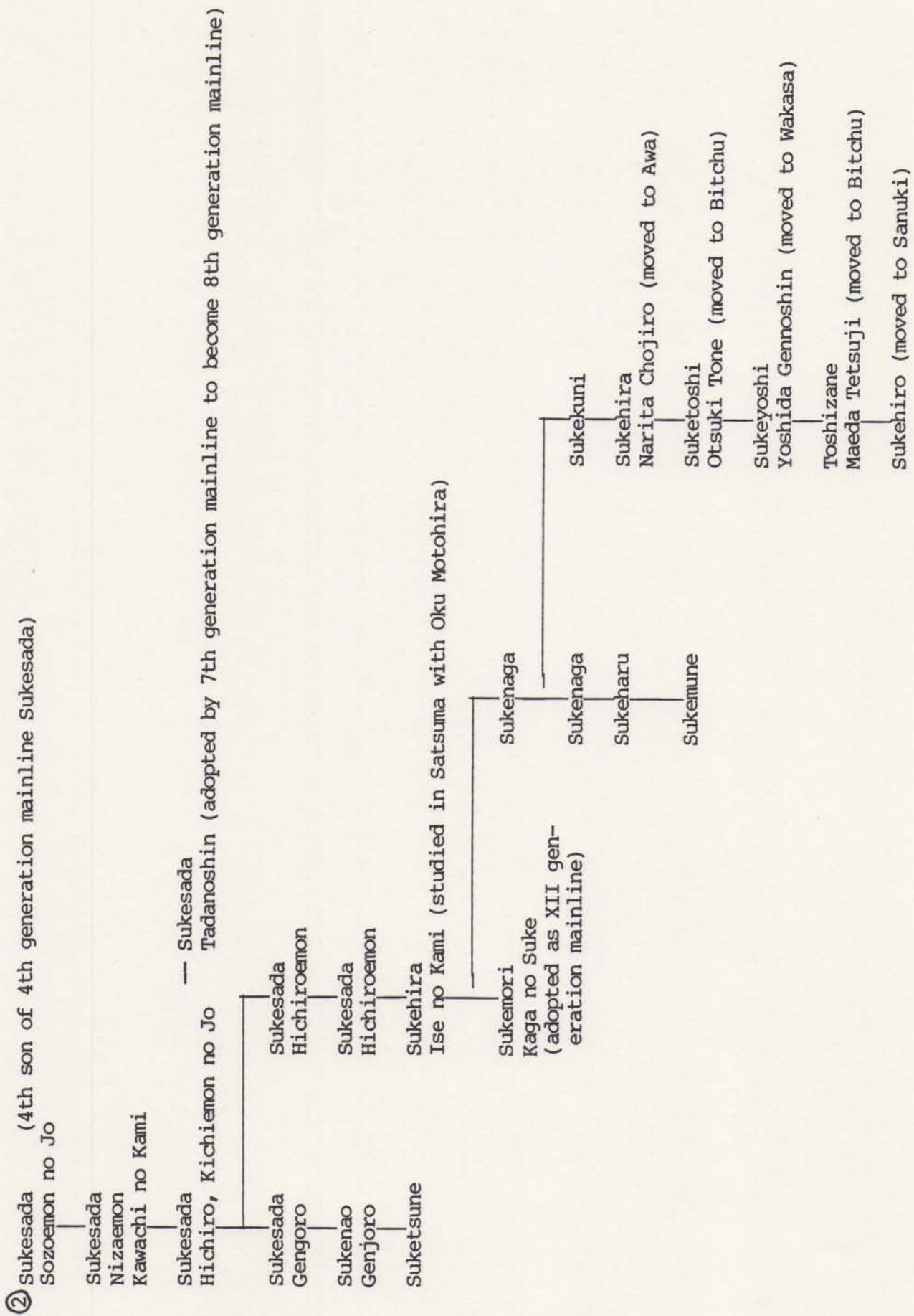
Choji
Gennoshin

Toshitsugu
Yasunoshin

Sukeharu
Mohei

Kunimasa

Corollary Generations



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